

*** NETANSWERS INTERNET EXTRA ***

*** Number 56: Bookmarks ***

If you use a Web browser (and who doesn't?) you most likely have some sites bookmarked. Once you find an interesting Web page, bookmarking that page is the guarantee you'll be able to find your way back.

But there's no guarantee that you'll be able to find your bookmark. As you surf the Web and find sundry interesting sites, one's list of bookmarks can grow and grow until it has become a massive, unmanageable list. And if you decide to switch Web browsers, how can you move your list of bookmarks to your new browser?

-.-.- Bookmark Basics -.-.-

Bookmarks go by many names: Internet Explorer calls them "favorites." Opera uses the name "hotlist." And Netscape uses that confusing, technical term "bookmarks." By any name, bookmarks are the de facto way to save the address of a Web page.

To bookmark a page, simply choose your browser's "Add to Bookmarks" or "Add to Favorites" function. Easy. Just tossing sites into your bookmarks file this way isn't enough: eventually, you'll end up with an unwieldy, unorganized list of sites. Anyone with more than a handful of pages marked would be doing themselves a favor by taking a few moments to organize those bookmarks.

In Netscape, choose Edit Bookmarks from the Bookmarks toolbar. In Internet Explorer, choose Organize Favorites from the Favorites menu. Now you'll see a list of your bookmarks. Here you can create subfolders with which to categorize your bookmarks in any way you want. Move them around, delete them, even rename them. Bend them to your will. You'll notice that your browser shipped with several folders stuffed with bookmarks to sites you don't visit: go ahead and delete them. You've got enough bookmark clutter; you don't need someone else's canned site choices crowding in.

My favorite bookmark-related function in Netscape is called Update Bookmarks, available under the View menu of the Edit Bookmarks window. Update Bookmarks will quickly scan all of your bookmarked pages (or just ones that you choose) and tell you which pages have changed since the last time you used Update Bookmarks. This is a great way to keep up to date on the happenings at your favorite sites.

-.-.- Converting Bookmarks -.-.-

New versions of Netscape Communicator and Microsoft Internet Explorer are being released (seemingly) daily. I think it's safe to say that most of us are about as devoted to our Web browsers as we are devoted to our toothpaste: happy enough, but willing to move on as soon as something better comes along. So, if you're a Netscape user and decide to switch to the latest version of Internet Explorer, there's nothing stopping you -- right? Except your bookmarks. You may have dozens or hundreds of Web pages saved in your browser's bookmark file, and losing them is a painful option.

So, grab a copy of Bookmark Converter, a useful little utility that converts bookmark files between those two programs. That way, when you switch from Netscape to IE, or the other way around, you won't lose those precious bookmarks.

Bookmark Converter is especially useful if you use both browsers on your PC. You can have the program synchronize bookmarks between the browsers, assuring that your favorite sites will be available no matter which program you happen to be using.

Bookmark Converter is shareware, costing a big \$8. You can download it from http://www.abc.se/~m9761/bm_conv/.

-.-.- Build a Better Bookmark -.-.-

You may want to ditch your browser's bookmarking capabilities altogether, instead opting for a separate utility dedicated to managing bookmarks. Bookmark utilities work in tandem with your Web browser, offering many more functions for organizing and finding your bookmarks.

QuikLinks Explorer is one such program for Windows. The program looks and works very much like the Windows 95 Explorer, and supports just about any browser you might want to use. What new and spiffy tricks can it do? For starters: you can write descriptions of bookmarked pages, assign a particular page to be opened in a particular browser, and (of course) arrange, sort and meld your bookmarks into any organization that you like.

Several versions of QuikLinks Explorer are available, including a freeware version, a \$20 standard version and a \$40 "gold edition." The functionality of the standard version can be expanded with add-ons. Upgrades include the abilities to keep track of when bookmarked sites are changed (a la Netscape's Update Bookmarks function), and search with multiple search engines at once. For more information or to download the software, visit <http://www.quiklinks.com>.

A similar program is available for Macintosh: URL Manager Pro is a \$25 shareware utility that allows you to organize and collect URLs in a hierarchical structure. It's easier to use than your browser's built-in bookmark functions, and much more powerful. URL Manager Pro is available from <http://www.url-manager.com>.

=*=*= SOFTWARE MENTIONED IN THIS ISSUE =*=*=

Bookmark Converter: http://www.abc.se/~m9761/bm_conv/

QuikLinks Explorer: <http://www.quiklinks.com>

URL Manager Pro: <http://www.url-manager.com>

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Got comments or ideas for future issues? We want to hear 'em. Just send a message to savetz@compuserve.com (74774,2725).

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